

Jesus, the World's Savior

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."—Matthew 1:21

Never before in human experience has there been such a dire need for a competent ruler. We need one who is able to lead the hate infected nations of earth out of the crosscurrents of selfishness and despair into the wholesome atmosphere of trust and goodwill. Without this there can be no lasting peace, or security, either for individuals or nations.

There are many outstanding heroes whose names and accomplishments glorify the pages of history. But none of them had to deal with such complex conditions as confront the world today, nor were their problems so numerous. Today every nation has its problems, and no one seems able to find adequate solutions. The world needs a superman, to lead it out of the chaos that has developed from two global wars. But where such a leader may be found no one will venture to say.

In the Bible, the Creator has given his people a blueprint of his plan for world peace. His Word reveals in clear terms that Jesus is the chief One in the divine arrangements for the blessing of the people. The song of the angels on the night Jesus was born is sufficient to confirm this, for they identified him as the Savior of the world, through whom God's goodwill would be manifested to the dying race. Those angels also prophesied that through Jesus there would come peace on earth.

But who is Jesus, and what are his characteristics? What reasons have we for believing he meets all the qualifications needed to restore peace to the chaotic world? We know no better way of finding the answers to these questions than to examine the prophecies and promises in the Word of God which speak of him and of his qualifications. As we do this, the plan of God itself, as it relates to Jesus, His son, will unfold before us in all its glorious harmony and beauty.

The Word (Logos) Made Flesh

Jesus had a pre-human existence. That fact is brought to light in John 1:1-3. In John 1:14 we read that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." That the Logos was made flesh, that is, transferred from his pre-human state to the state of manhood, is revealed in the Bible to be a fundamental feature of the plan of God. Hebrews 2:9,14 says that this was so he might die as a human being for the sins of the world.

In John 6:51 we find Jesus' own explanation of the matter, and he says he would give his flesh for the life of the world. This sacrifice of Jesus' humanity was as a substitute for the forfeited life of father Adam. Paul affirms that "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Cor. 15:22) In I Timothy 2:6 the apostle explains that Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, and the Greek word here translated "ransom" means

"corresponding price."

Here, then, is the philosophy of God's plan of redemption through Christ. His only begotten Son was made flesh—perfect flesh—that he might become a substitute in death for condemned Adam, and thus provide a way of escape from death for Adam and all his race. Thus did Jesus die for all mankind.

The whole world praises the spirit of sacrifice on behalf of others, and recognizes its value in those who would rule over the people. All know the evil that results from a ruler seeking merely his own interests, his own welfare, his own advancement, and the increase of his own power, regardless of how others might be affected. Perhaps one of the most praiseworthy characteristics, when possessed by those who attempt to administer the affairs of government, is willingness to spend and be spent in the interests of the people.

But in all the annals of history, no ruler, no statesman, no president, king, emperor, or dictator has ever matched Jesus in his spirit of devotion, first to God and then to mankind. He "went about doing good," the Scriptures tell us. (Acts 10:38) He used his strength to teach others, as daily he carried on his ministry of self-sacrifice. And finally he completed that wonderful life of service by voluntarily giving himself up to that cruel death on the cross.

Thus did the man Christ Jesus prove his faithfulness. The world will be able to trust such a noble character as they learn about him when his long-promised kingdom is established in the earth and functions as a world government for the blessing of the people.

A Priest and King

The name Jesus means one who saves—a savior. But God's plan for saving the world from sin and death is so comprehensive that in order to help us understand all its implications God, through his Word, has given Jesus many and varied titles, each giving some particular viewpoint regarding the salvation brought by him to the dying race. One of these titles is "priest."

When we think of the title "priest" we are not to have in mind the misuse of this term by various denominational groups, but we should go back to the Old Testament and note the significance attached to its original use. God appointed priests to serve the nation of Israel in matters of worship. Their work was twofold—they offered sacrifice, and then extended blessings to the people, based upon the offering of sacrifice.

Thus it is with Jesus. He has already served as priest for the offering of sacrifice, and later will extend to the world the blessing of life everlasting, made available by the sacrifice he offered. In the case of the priests of Israel, they offered animals in typical sacrifice, but Jesus offered himself as the great antitypical sacrifice.

Jesus is also appointed by God to be King of earth, and in Hebrews 6:20; 7:1,2 the apostle combines these two offices in the person of Jesus. Thus we are reminded that he will rule

over the people and bless them. Concerning this priestly King the prophet wrote: "All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight."—Ps. 72:11-14

A prophecy of this kind can be appreciated only in the light of God's promise that Jesus shall reign over the earth for a thousand years. It is not a matter of waiting for the people to accept his kingship before he can rule. There is a definite time in the plan of God for the Kingdom to be set up in the earth. In a prophecy concerning Jesus as the new King of earth, we are told that first he will dash the nations to pieces as "a potter's vessel."—Ps. 2:5-12

A Judge

Another title which the Scriptures assign to Jesus is "Judge." As a judge he also will be a blesser of the people. The psalmist wrote concerning Jesus, "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor." (Ps. 72:4) The great oppressor of the people throughout the ages has been Satan, the Devil. He has enslaved the minds of men through deceit, and thereby prevented them from knowing and serving the true God, whom to know and serve in the right way will mean life eternal.

Traditional misconceptions of the judgment day have hindered many from appreciating Jesus as the great judge of mankind. Instead of looking forward to the judgment day as a time of blessing, they have dreaded its approach, supposing it to be a time of doom for nearly everybody. Actually, the thousand years during which Jesus will "judge the world in righteousness" will be a time of blessing for the people.—Acts 17:31

When our first parents transgressed the divine law, they brought themselves and their offspring under condemnation to death. But Jesus' death as man's Redeemer provided a way of escape from that condemnation. The benefits to be derived from the death of Jesus are available only through belief in him, and obedience to the divine will. But Paul raises the question, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:14) Few, as yet, have heard of Jesus in the comprehensive manner necessary for them to believe in him. But the Scriptures reveal that they will have this opportunity during the coming judgment day.

The judgment day will therefore be a time of enlightenment for the people. Paul implies this in his sermon on Mars' hill, in which he contrasts the "times of this ignorance" with the day which God has appointed in which "he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained," Jesus Christ the Righteous. (Acts 17:31) That will be the "due time" when the great fact that Jesus died for the sins of the world will be "testified," or made known, to all mankind.—I Tim. 2:4-6

That the work of judgment will include enlightening the people is indicated in Revelation 20:12, where we are told that the "books" will be opened and every man will be judged

according to the things "written in the books." These books are by some erroneously supposed to contain the records of the past lives of the human race, and the opening of the books signifies to them that all will have their virtues and their sins reviewed during the judgment day, and thus be judged worthy or unworthy of everlasting life.

But there is nothing in the Scriptures to warrant this conclusion. The account declares that the people are to be judged by the things written in the books, and Jesus said that his "word" will judge the people at that time. (John 12:48) The opening of these symbolic books must therefore signify a revelation of the truth as the standard of judgment.

In Isaiah 29:11,12 a similar thought is brought to our attention. Here a "book" is discussed. It is a "sealed" book, which cannot be opened either by the learned or the unlearned. But the prophecy shows that finally this book is opened, enabling the deaf and the blind to hear and see what is written in it. This prophecy reminds us of the spiritual darkness that enshrouds the people by the reign of sin and death, and assures us that the time will come when this darkness will be dispelled. Then the people will see and know the divine will.

It is this future day of enlightenment that the Bible designates the judgment day, during which Jesus will judge the world in righteousness. It will not be a time merely for giving awards and pronouncing sentence. The work of judgment includes a test under the enlightenment which will obtain at that time.

This will be the first real, full opportunity the world will have had for believing on Christ and receiving everlasting life. All came under condemnation through Adam, and the vast majority go into the tomb without even knowing that Christ died for them. But during the judgment day, they will be awakened from death, enlightened concerning Jesus and, upon the basis of that enlightenment, given an opportunity to accept God's gift, obey the laws of the kingdom, and live forever.

Wonderful Counsellor

Isaiah 9:6,7 is a wonderful prophecy of the birth of Jesus and the worldwide scope of the government which he will preside over. To help us grasp more fully what his rulership will mean for the people, this prophecy assigns him several meaningful titles. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Some Hebrew scholars claim that no punctuation should follow the word "Wonderful," that it is merely an adjective for "counsellor." We know, of course, that Jesus is "Wonderful." No matter from what standpoint we view the Master, he is "Wonderful." But it seems that here the Lord is telling us that Jesus is a "Wonderful Counsellor."

This term "Counsellor" means more than one who gives advice: it is more like our word attorney, one who represents a client before the bar of justice. Jesus will act in this capacity when he serves as "Mediator between God and men." (I Tim. 2:4-6) His work as Counsellor

will be akin to his role as judge. In both respects he will deal with the people to effect their reconciliation with God, and thereby provide them everlasting life.

Jesus will indeed be a "Wonderful Counsellor" and a righteous Judge. In another prophecy we read of this future Judge, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth."—Isa. 11:2-4

One with such qualifications will deal justly with the people, and under his administration those who desire to return to God and to receive the blessing of everlasting life on a perfected earth will be given every opportunity to do so.

The assurance that he will not judge after the sight of the eyes, nor according to the hearing of the ears is especially noteworthy. The most competent of all the judges the world has ever had have been limited in making their decisions upon what could be seen and heard—they have been unable to look into the hearts of the people and there discover their hidden motives, or whether their words and conduct belied the real facts of their lives. But Jesus will be endowed with divine powers of perception. He will know the truth concerning all, regardless of their professions. No wonder Paul said that the world will be judged in righteousness by that man whom God hath ordained!—Acts 17:31

The Mighty God

Another title ascribed to Jesus is "The mighty God." (Isa. 9:6) This does not mean that Jesus is the "Almighty God," but it does mean that he has been highly exalted in the divine arrangement and that the Creator is pleased to have him recognized as a mighty God and to be worshipped. In John 5:22,23 we learn that the Heavenly Father has committed all judgment unto his Son, and that he desires all men to honor the Son even as they honor him.

In Isaiah 53:12 the high position of Jesus in the divine arrangement is again brought to our attention. In this chapter the suffering and death of the Redeemer of the world are prophesied. Because of his faithfulness the Creator promises, "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great." This was fulfilled when Jesus was raised from the dead and highly exalted to the right hand of the throne of God. There he became "The mighty God," the One to whom the whole world may properly look for succor, and from whom, as the representative of the Creator, they may properly expect the blessings of salvation from sin and death.

Another prophecy concerning Jesus foretold that his name would be "Immanuel," which means, "God with us." (Isa. 7:14) This does not mean that Jesus is the Almighty God, the Creator himself, but that he would be the representative of God. Jesus' coming to earth to die for the people was a wonderful manifestation of the love of God. (John 3:16) His miracles

were an eloquent illustration of God-given power, which will be employed by the glorified Christ for healing all the sick and raising all the dead.

The Scriptures declare that so far as the person of Jehovah the Creator is concerned, no man can look upon him and live. (Exod. 33:20) But in Jesus men saw the glorious characteristics of God manifested. And through the laws of his kingdom they will recognize even more that through him the justice, wisdom, love, and power of Almighty God have become operative for their eternal blessing. Gladly, then, will the people recognize Jesus as God's representative, and the manifestation of God's presence in their midst.

Michael Shall Stand Up

In Daniel 12:1 another title is applied to Jesus, namely, "Michael." The term Michael literally means "who as God"—that is, one who acts as a representative of God. In this prophecy we read that when "Michael stands up" there results a "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." In other words, this title describes Jesus in connection with his overthrow of the kingdoms of this world, preparatory to the establishment of his righteous order in the earth.

We are accustomed to think of Jesus as kindly and peaceful. But the manifestation of his authority and power against wickedness and the wicked institutions of earth will cause trouble—"a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." Even now we are witnessing the beginning of this trouble, due to come upon the nations of earth at the end of the age. Even in the prophecy of Isaiah 11:2-9, where we read that Jesus will judge the poor with righteousness, it is also declared that "with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."

It will be on account of his thoroughness in eradicating all wickedness and all evildoers from the earth that peace and tranquillity will eventually come to the people. The universal state of happiness and good will, which will follow the destruction of the enemies of God during the reign of Christ—even death itself (I Cor. 15:26)—is symbolized in the prophecy by the various animals of earth living peaceably together. The "wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; ... and a little child shall lead them."—Isaiah 11:6

The Everlasting Father

Isaiah declares that Jesus will also be "The everlasting Father." This does not mean, however, that he is the One whom we, as Christians, address as our "Heavenly Father." The term father means life giver, and an everlasting father would be one who gives everlasting life. Jesus will do this for all those who, during the thousand years of his reign, believe on him and obey the law of his kingdom. The life received by the people from their natural fathers has been uncertain and brief, but all who then come to Jesus will be given everlasting life.

Another scripture which throws light on the divine plan for giving life to the people through

Jesus is I Corinthians 15:45,47. Here the apostle refers to Jesus as "the last Adam," and declares that in his resurrection from death he was made a "quicken[ing] [life-giving] spirit"; that is, a spirit being endowed with the power to give life to others.

"The first man [Adam]" was of the earth, earthy. He and his wife were commanded to multiply and fill the earth with their offspring. Thus he became the original father of the human race. However, because he transgressed the divine law, he brought the penalty of death upon himself. This meant that he could transmit to his offspring only a measure of life, for they inherited his imperfection, and thus automatically came under condemnation to death. Thus it was that "the first man Adam" fathered the race in a dying condition.

But it will be different in the case of the last Adam. The last Adam will regenerate the children of the first Adam and enable them to enjoy everlasting life. Thus he will be "The everlasting Father." And Jesus himself referred to the Millennial Kingdom as the time of "regeneration."—Matthew 19:28

In keeping with this, the prophecy of Isaiah 53:10 tells us that Jesus shall see his "seed." Verse eight of this chapter speaks of his being cut off from the land of the living, and says that there was none to declare his generation. That is, he did not marry and raise a family as men ordinarily do, hence there are no natural descendants of Jesus, no one to "declare his generation."

Yet the prophet states, "He shall see his seed"; that is, children will be raised up to him—not in the ordinary way, but by virtue of the fact that as the Redeemer of the world he will be in a position to give the people life. He will be their lifegiver or father. And because of this, Jesus "shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."—Isaiah 53:11

"Travail" is associated with the bringing forth of children, and here the prophet uses the term for the method by which Jesus gives life to the people. This travail is vividly described in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. He was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Also, he was led "as a lamb to the slaughter," as well as being bruised and afflicted.

Yes, this was travail indeed, which continued with him all the way to the cross, ending only when, from his bursting heart he cried, "It is finished." But out of this travail will come a regenerated life for all of the first Adams children who will accept it on the terms of belief and obedience. Thus shall Jesus "see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," for countless millions will acclaim him as their father, their life giver, and with one accord will sing his praises, saying, "We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Praise God for his gift to men of "The everlasting Father."

The Prince of Peace

Jesus, the Savior of the world, will also be "The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6) The angelic song which heralded the birth of Jesus features the happy theme of "peace on earth," and

finally this peace will become a reality. Jesus will be the great King when the "mountain"—kingdom—of the Lord is "established in the top of the mountains, and ... exalted above the hills." (Micah 4:1) When the nations of earth realize the utter failure of their own efforts to establish peace in place of the present distress they will say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord ... he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."—Micah 4:2

When the nations thus seek the Lord's ways and are willing to walk in them, they will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks," and "nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Micah 4:3) Thus will the Prince of Peace establish peace among the nations.

But he will do more than establish peace between nations. This would still leave strife and turmoil within nations. Jesus will establish universal peace, which will mean peace among and within nations—community peace, family peace, and most important of all, peace of heart.

This peace of heart will result from being at peace with God. The world of mankind today is alienated from God through wicked works. (Eph. 4:18,19; Col. 1:21) But the Prince of Peace, serving as Mediator, Counsellor, and Judge, will reconcile men to God. No longer will the human race be in rebellion against the Creator. And being in harmony with him and enjoying the sunshine of his favor, they will have life everlasting.—Psalms 30:5

Unto the Lamb Forever

Jesus, the Savior of the world, is depicted in Revelation 5:6,11-13 as a slain Lamb. This symbolic description of Jesus is alluded to frequently in the Scriptures. In the 53rd chapter of Isaiah it is used extensively in a prophecy of Jesus' suffering and death. The Apostle Peter explains that the prophecies not only foretold the suffering of Jesus, but also the "glory that should follow" (I Peter 1:11), and in Revelation 5:13 a beautiful description of his foretold glory is set forth. We quote:

"And every creature which is in heaven and on earth, and such as are in the sea and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Here is an indication of a complete reconciliation so all-embracing that "every creature" will sing the praises of God and of the Lamb. This does not mean universal salvation regardless of belief or obedience, for another prophecy says those who will not obey "shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:19-23) But it does mean those who accept the opportunity in the kingdom will be restored to harmony with the Father, and will honor both God and his beloved Son, our Savior.

With the Lamb

The Lamb which was slain for the sins of the world and is now exalted to the right hand of

God to be the King of earth—"the lion of the tribe of Judah"(Rev. 5:5; Gen. 49:9)—is later in the Book of Revelation pictured as standing on Mt. Zion. (Rev. 14:1) This is a symbol of his kingly authority and exaltation. (Psalm 2:6-9) In this Mt. Zion picture we are told that others are to be with the Lamb in that highly exalted position—144,000 others.

"These are they," we read, "which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." (Rev. 14:4) These are the same ones referred to in Revelation 20:4, who sacrificed their lives "for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God." Because of this "they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." These are the ones mentioned by the Apostle Paul as the "children of God," and "if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."—Romans 8:16,17

These, in brief, are the true church of Christ, called out from the world during the present age. For faithfully laying down their lives in divine service, they will share the kingdom honor and glory with Jesus. They will reign with him as priests and kings. (Rev. 20:6) They will be co-judges with him. (I Cor. 6:2,3) They serve with him as "ministers of reconciliation." (II Cor. 5:18) In short, they will share the high honor of all of Jesus' high offices in the divine plan for reconciling a lost world to God. They will even share his heavenly home.—John 14:1-3

As the "bride" of Christ, the church will also share in that glorious future work of giving life and perfection of mind and body to the dying race. "The Spirit *and the bride* say, Come," the Revelator writes, "and let him take the water of life freely." What a glorious prospect!—Revelation 22:17

In Isaiah 11:1 Jesus is called the "stem of Jesse" (David's father) but in Revelation 22:16 Jesus is called both the "root" and "offspring" of David. So far as Jesus' human life was concerned, he was a descendant of David, a "stem." But in his role of Savior and Lifegiver he becomes the "root" of David, that is, his source of life. And not only David, but all mankind, will have an opportunity to enjoy the everlasting life made available through Jesus' redemptive work.

The Morning Star

Revelation 22:16 also speaks of Jesus as the "bright and morning star." In Malachi 4:2 he is described as "the Sun of Righteousness," who will arise with "healing in his wings." Under the warming, healing rays of divine favor as they will radiate from him during the Millennium, all mankind will have an opportunity to be healed—restored to perfection of life. But here he shines forth as the Sun of Righteousness, he shines in the hearts of his true followers as the Morning Star.

The morning star is one which makes its appearance just before the rising of the sun. In keeping with this illustration, the prophecies indicate that before the establishment of Christ's kingdom—before the world will enjoy the warming and healing rays of the Sun of Righteousness—the Lord's own people will recognize the presence of Jesus through the

pages of prophecy and the signs of the times. They see him as the Morning Star while the world is still asleep and unaware of his presence.—II Pet. 1:19

We believe the Morning Star is already visible by the eye of faith, and soon the darkness and chaos of the world will give place to the stabilizing authority of Jesus, the new King of earth. The prospect is glorious, and we bid all to examine more diligently the prophetic testimony of the Word and be assured from its sacred pages that Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago, who died on the cross as man's Redeemer, who was raised from the dead as a divine being, is now present and about to manifest himself to the world as their king. Then will be fulfilled all those glorious promises of God of the rich and universal blessings of health and life which all mankind will soon enjoy.